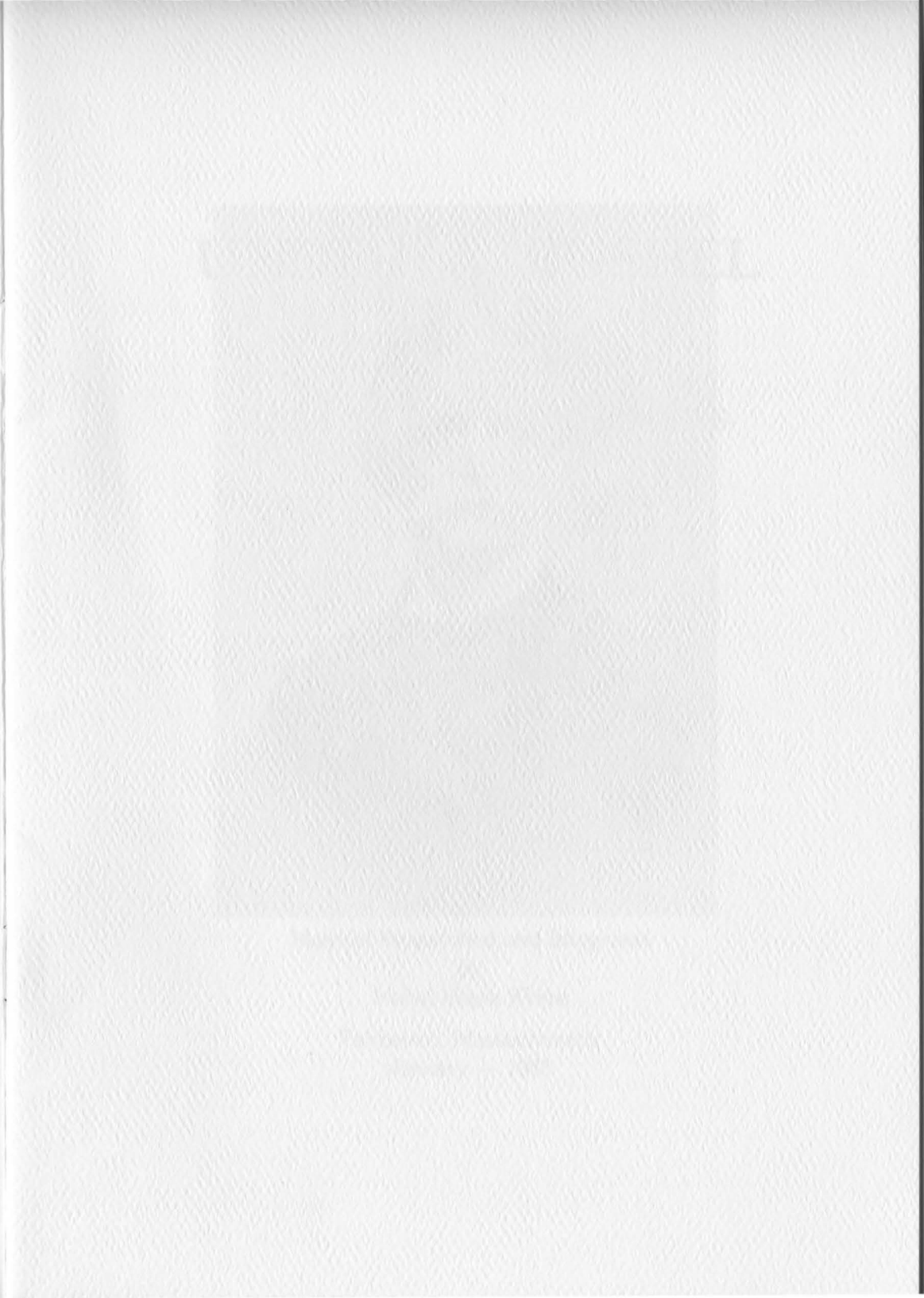


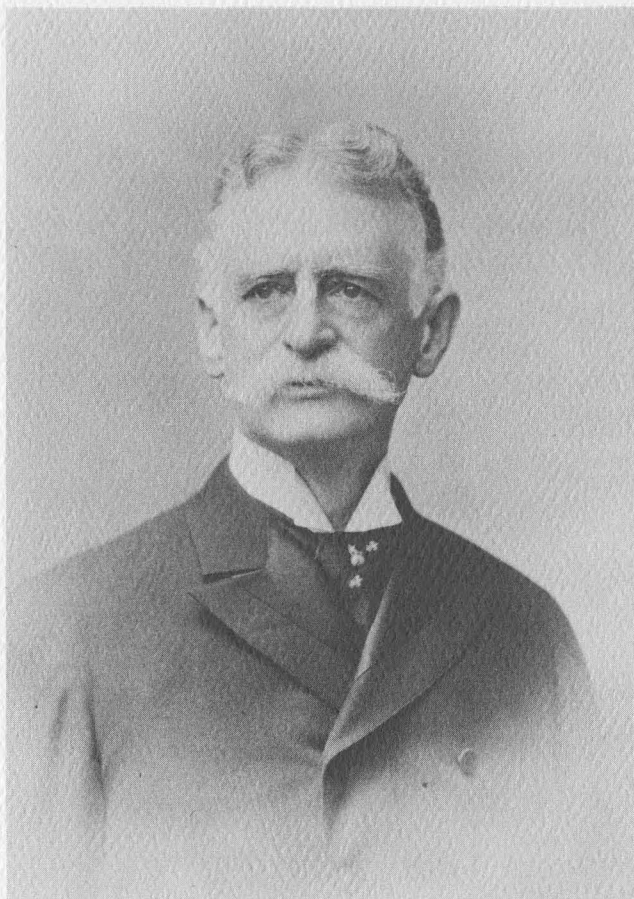
# UNDER A BUSHEL

Some Little Known  
Philanthropy  
of  
-HENRY HUTTLESTON ROGERS-

By  
Mabel Hoyle Knipe







# UNDER A BUSHEL

Some Little Known  
Philanthropy  
of  
-HENRY HUTTLESTON ROGERS-

"One of the best friends I ever had, and the  
nearest perfect as man and gentleman, I have  
yet met among my race"

-Mark Twain-

Material Researched and Integrated

By

Mabel Hoyle Knipe

Fairhaven, Massachusetts

January — 1983

## DEDICATION

*In warm personal gratitude, the author dedicates this last of eleven booklets about Fairhaven and her ways to the memory of:*

### HENRY HUTTLESTON ROGERS (1840-1909)

*Because he's been here:*

*We have wide rooms to learn in;  
Shelter to worship and to pray;  
Comfort of alcoved books to renew us;  
An old grey fort that fingers a bay.*

*Because he's been here:*

*Wide lawns stretch verdant;  
Sun-gleam on pane of rose and blue;  
Tumbling notes from chimes in a belfry;  
Red brick marches in path straight and true.*

*Because he's been here:*

*He has bound us in beauty;  
Has chained us in union we may not forego;  
From pride and gratitude has been forged a kinship;  
Each for the other wherever we go.*

*Because he's been here:*

*Our lives have been kinder;  
In gentler paths our ways have been set;  
And we who raise our eyes toward towers —  
Are never likely to forget!*

M.H.K.  
January — 1983

## UNDER A BUSHEL

*"Take heed that ye do not  
Your alms before men  
To be seen of them: Otherwise  
Ye have no reward of your  
Father which is in Heaven"  
Matthew 6:1—4*

No person living in the area of greater New Bedford, Massachusetts, can be unaware of the devotion which Henry Huttleston Rogers displayed for his home town of Fairhaven. This is demonstrated stark against an evening sky as one crosses the New Bedford-Fairhaven bridge. There are the squat tower of the Rogers School; the red tiled reaches of the Millicent Library; the copper finger of the Town Hall; great granite liftings of the Unitarian Memorial Church; and as proud greeting to the town — the Elizabethan grandeur of Fairhaven High School.

Fairhaven, of course, received much more largesse from this rich and powerful son who always recalled with gratitude the warmth of boyhood experience in a poor and struggling little town. Eventually, he made of that town a show-place for superb architecture; an experiment in astute business procedure; and a focus for civic conscience.

All this philanthropy is well remembered because it is so apparent, but it has been forgotten that Mr. Rogers' magnanimity did not stop at the boundaries of his town. His concern embraced the entire area. Since he was loath to make public his donations the extent of his charity to this entire community was not realized until after his death and even now, much of his quiet goodness can only be surmised.

A year after Rogers' death, Z.W. Pease of the NEW BEDFORD STANDARD editorial staff, writing an article in the BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE stated:

*"It was the habit of the late Henry H. Rogers in his lifetime to send at Christmas time — a handsome donation for practically every New Bedford charity. A large number of societies received a fixed contribution of \$750 annually, and their work was based upon an income of which this was a considerable part. Now that the income is no longer forthcoming, one after another is making a public appeal for funds to make up deficiencies."*

*"The part that Mr. Rogers played in the philanthropies of New Bedford is just coming to be appreciated, for he never*



permitted any of those who received his bounty to make public recognition. As a result, the public had no knowledge how far he was assisting the societies in their work. The fact is just made known to the people at large by the plight of the charitable societies revealed in the annual (1910) reports.”

## SAINT LUKE'S HOSPITAL and HENRY HUTTLESTON ROGERS

Saint Luke's Hospital in New Bedford stood beneficiary to much charitable concern from Mr. Rogers. In 1884, the hospital began its honorable history in a two and a half story house at 81 Fourth Street (now Purchase Street). There were eleven beds; and service during the first year was extended to sixty-two patients. Physicians donated their skill free of charge, and the three nurses were housed outside the hospital at a cost of \$8 weekly. There were, in addition, eight “pupil nurses,” and three of these “graduated” on July 5, 1885.

As the corps of nurses thus increased, the unfortunate women were housed in the hospital living in the confines of a cold attic! Yet, their lot was ameliorated by the hiring of a qualified matron and the adoption of a code of rules regarding their role in hospital regulation. Then, in 1886, it was announced that staff doctors would offer a course of lectures for nurses. Thus, Saint Luke's prestigious School of Nursing was formally inaugurated and its proud history initiated.

Several philanthropic women, notably Miss Anna M. Lumbard of New Bedford, worked tirelessly to establish the hospital; and people of wealth from the area were solicited again and again as hospital service became familiar and useful to the citizenry. Moreover, local industry was persuaded to donate through use of “mite boxes” placed in the plants; and entertainments and “galas” donated door and ticket receipts.

At last, in 1895, a new hospital complex consisting of four buildings was dedicated at Page and Allen Streets amid almost hysterical fervor and rejoicing.

## ROGERS WARD

Yet, in 1901 — during an epidemic of typhoid fever, facilities of this new hospital were incredibly strained. A FRIEND (later discovered to be H.H. Rogers) contributed \$40,000 for a new ward for private patients, thereby expanding patient capacity by twenty beds. This ward was built

from plans by a Boston architect, George H. Ingraham, and was erected in red brick with end porches. Rogers also contributed \$1,000 for beds and \$4,000 to defray other extras.

## THE WHITE HOME

Mr Rogers' concern for the women on the nursing staff became obvious when he anonymously volunteered \$1,000 toward establishment of a nurses' ward, for although the working conditions of the nurses had greatly improved after erection of the Page Street edifices the young women in an ever-expanding training program needed space, privacy and more home-like accommodations.

In 1904-05, a FRIEND purchased a lot of land north of the hospital extending to Taber Street, and containing 267.74 rods. It was announced that this FRIEND would erect a nurses' home at a contemplated expense of \$75,000.

During this same period, Mr. Rogers was building just across the river — the imposing Fairhaven High School which was opened in 1906. So the two gracious buildings rose simultaneously, and on May 1, 1907, Saint Luke's nurses occupied the WHITE HOME.

The building offered accommodations for forty-four nurses. It was constructed of Harvard brick with pale trimming. A wide veranda supported by impressive white pillars stretched across the south front and relieved the austerity of a simply patterned Colonial design.

Description from the FAIRHAVEN STAR of May 18, 1907, states that the home, under construction for two years and a half,

“is complete in every equipment, even to the linen which is marked with the name of the home. It is replete with every luxury and home comfort which the nurse could desire.

“Kitchen, dining room, serving rooms and one classroom have been grouped in the basement, which, besides the ample stairway descending from the first floor — is reached from the hospital group across the lawn by a subway with walls of cement.”

The nurses settled happily into the luxury of their new quarters. They revelled in the spacious, well furnished bed-sitting rooms while the handsome reception room with its exquisite panelling, broad fire-place and pendant chandeliers was locale for many an informal dance, party and reception.

The Class of 1907, first class to be graduated from the new home, held graduation exercises in this room with the Rev Frank L. Phalen, pastor of the Unitarian Memorial Church of Fairhaven, offering opening prayer and benediction.

Over the years, the WHITE HOME has been a tremendous asset to Saint Luke's Hospital, for it is estimated that this splendid school of nursing trained no fewer than 1,795 nurses to give efficient service in hospitals throughout the United States and over seas. The nursing school was phased out over a period of years in the 1970's, and the building has since been used for business, continuing education and special project areas.

On a vestibule wall of the WHITE HOME was affixed a bronze tablet. It stated:

“THIS BUILDING HAS BEEN  
PRESENTED BY A FRIEND  
AS A HOME AND SCHOOL  
FOR NURSES  
IN MEMORY OF

DR. CHARLES WARREN WHITE JR.  
OF FAIRHAVEN, MASS.

FOR MANY YEARS A DEVOTED AND SKILLFUL MEMBER  
OF THE MEDICAL STAFF OF SAINT LUKE'S HOSPITAL”

## DR. CHARLES WARREN WHITE JR.

Dr Charles Warren White Jr had died three years before, at the home he had built on the corner of William and Union Streets in Fairhaven. He was only forty-four years old, and expired after an illness of but one day. Educated at Harvard, he had also taken a degree at Heidelberg University and was a member of the staff of physicians at Saint Luke's Hospital. He was much beloved by Fairhaven citizenry, and the news of his death occasioned much grief. Mr. Rogers was warm friend of Dr. White and highly appreciative of his efforts among the people in his home community. It was undoubtedly a proud and gratifying experience to raise the WHITE HOME as splendid memorial to the friend and healer of his towns-people.

## OLD DARTMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Old Dartmouth Historical Society — long a proud asset of the New Bedford area — was incorporated in 1903 and forced to lease the Masonic Building as a meeting place. For want of funds to buy adequate meeting quarters, this arrangement lasted for three years.

In September of 1906, a meeting of the organization was held in the vacated Bank of Commerce Building, and it was announced that this building had been purchased as an anonymous gift to the Old Dartmouth Historical Society. It was not until 1909 at the death of Henry H. Rogers, that the information was revealed naming Mr. Rogers as the generous donor. The building is still a segment of the Society's complex in New Bedford's Historic District.

## MATTAPOISETT CENTER SCHOOL

In October of 1897, the citizens of Mattapoisett held a special town meeting and appropriated \$1200 with which to purchase a lot at the corner of Church and Barstow Streets popularly known as the “Hammond Lot.” Dr J. C. Shaw, intermediary agent for a FRIEND, assured the towns-people that a generous donor would build in that place a fine new school house. There was, of course, much speculation among the natives as to whom the FRIEND might be. The FAIRHAVEN STAR states that one of the residents commented:

“Of course, I do not absolutely know this, but from some facts I do know — I am led to believe that Henry Rogers is involved in the project. His family has always visited here during the summer Although Mr Rogers may not be the sole donor, I am of the opinion that he is either the one or among those who are making the handsome gift to the town.”

This speaker, of course, was right, and at a later date Mr. Rogers explained the stimulus that had prompted his decision to build a modern school for Mattapoisett youngsters. He commented that a year or two before this decision, he and Mrs. Rogers had attended the dedication of Mattapoisett's town hall. Conversing with a prominent citizen, he had been told that the town hall was a satisfaction, but what the town really needed was a new school!

As Mr. and Mrs. Rogers drove home, he said thoughtfully to his wife,

*“I've a mind to build a school for Mattapoisett!”*



She replied,

*"Why don't you do it?"*

So the much needed school was built, and in convenience and sanitation, it was, in its time — second to no school edifice in the state. At the dedication and attendant reception, Mr. Rogers spoke of his affection for Mattapoissett. He said:

*"The beginning of my education — the alphabet — was learned in Fairhaven, but before I was six years old, my parents came to Mattapoissett, and I attended my first school at Eagle Hall. Later, I attended the little school house on Church Street."*

Further displaying his pleasure in giving the new school, he looked into the joyful faces of child and adult in the audience and stated:

*"I am confident that you feel grateful for the gift, yet for the reason that I have been blessed with the spirit to give, and the means to carry out, I must claim that my happiness equals yours. I hope, therefore, that the building will be accepted in a spirit of mutual congratulation."*

*"If the gift commands your increased interest in educational matters, and the children are made happier and healthier, my purpose will be accomplished."*

Then, looking into the young faces of some boys — prospective pupils gathered in a knot before him — he offered some of the wisdom which he had attained in that long march from near penury to affluence. He said:

*"I want to say a word or two to these boys now that I have a chance — about how they may become good citizens. This world was made to work in; to work in for our own sustenance and for the help of others. Every creature in the world has to make its living — the animals of the field, the birds of the air — all must work. If you work, you may succeed, but if you don't you never will. The real pleasure of this life is found in work!"*

In 1900, the citizens of Mattapoissett placed a handsome bronze tablet in the town's new school building. The inscription read:

THE PLACING OF THIS TABLET  
BY THE PEOPLE OF  
THE TOWN OF MATTAPOISETT  
IS INTENDED  
AS AN EXPRESSION  
OF THEIR GRATITUDE  
TO

HENRY HUTTLESTON ROGERS  
AND HIS FAMILY

FOR THE GIFT OF THIS  
SCHOOL BUILDING

## MATTAPOISETT and FAIRHAVEN HIGH SCHOOL

The Center School has served Mattapoissett well, but it was not the end of Rogers' beneficence to that town. When Fairhaven High School was finished in 1906, Mr. Rogers directed that Mattapoissett students were to use its superior facilities as long as population levels made accommodation feasible. Young people of Mattapoissett attended Fairhaven High School until June, 1961 when crowded classrooms and strained facilities broke off a long and distinguished relationship. Mary Jean Schmidt, leader of a student panel discussion at the 1961 graduation said:

*"— For fifty-five years students from Fairhaven and Mattapoissett have shared good days together at Fairhaven High School. Contributions that Mattapoissett students have made to the high school are innumerable and ties formed between the students from the two towns have been deep and lasting. Indeed, it has not been until impending separation has threatened that we have fully realized the value of this school union. Now, with the building of the Old Rochester Regional High School, Mattapoissett students will no longer accompany us to classes, and a pleasant and profitable relationship of more than half a century will be terminated."*

At the annual town meeting in Mattapoissett in 1907 — a resolution acknowledged Mr. Rogers' further kindness to the town. It stated:

"Resolved that this town now assembled in annual meeting record its appreciation and express its thanks to Mr Henry H. Rogers for his generous thoughtfulness in that having furnished a magnificently equipped High School to the town of Fairhaven, he has directed that its privileges and benefits be now made free for such time as they can be accommodated to the pupils of Mattapoisett, and thereby has made a contribution to education in this community which will continue as a blessing to its children for some years to come."

## ACUSHNET and MR. ROGERS

In 1904, Acushnet, the little village to the north of Fairhaven, once integral part of the larger township, was also having trouble with its educational responsibilities. A new school was badly needed, and the townspeople, with considerable hardship, had raised \$1,000 toward the expense of construction which was a near prohibitive \$6,000. Mr Rogers learned of the dilemma and sent a gift of \$5,000, thus balancing out the indebtedness, and making a new school for Acushnet a reality.

A year later, the Methodist Society of Acushnet received a \$1,000 Rogers gift to be applied to the building fund for restoration of the church after a devastating fire.

## THE ATLAS TACK

The American Nail Company was originally a Boston corporation organized in 1864, but in 1865, the business moved to Fairhaven and located in the Rodman buildings on Fort Street property which had once been the locale for manufacture of spermaceti candles. The company gradually diverted its manufacturing zeal to making of tacks, and the American Tack Company was organized through the consolidation of several small companies from Assonet, Taunton and Dighton.

In 1882, a three-story stone building was erected on Fort Street to house the expanding venture, and in 1891, the American Tack Company was merged with the Atlas Tack Corporation and became Fairhaven's principal industry.

The dearth of steady employment in an area recovering very slowly from the traumatic collapse of the whaling trade had, for some time, been troubling Henry Rogers. He felt that his town must have dependable industry, and decided to lend impetus to the tack-making business, already established in town and exhibiting exceptional promise.

In 1899, at a mortgagee's sale, by a series of astute moves, he attained 25% of the Atlas Company's bonds for \$200,000 thus acquiring the property in Fairhaven, Taunton, Duxbury and Plymouth.

He determined to bring the assets and locale of the Atlas Tack Company to Fairhaven and for that purpose commenced the erection of a complete and modern factory on South Pleasant Street. In April, 1902, a thousand people attended the dedication ball held in the mammoth plant.

Rogers had been warned that if he insisted on locating in Fairhaven, transportation and accessibility of raw materials would be a problem, and he was advised to locate in New York. This advice went unheeded, and he declared, "It is Fairhaven or no-where!"

The new tack factory was located on a tract of fifteen acres, and was constructed of brick, glass and timber. Five hundred persons were eventually to be employed there, making tacks, eyelets, rivets and certain types of nails. The plant employed not only Fairhaven people but numbers from surrounding and far-flung areas. At one time, about 10% of all the tackers in the country found employment there, for tack-making was skilled work requiring long apprenticeship and commensurate high wages.

No figures are available, but without doubt, this was one of the most munificent of all Rogers' gifts to the area, and one in which he lost a great deal of money. A newspaper of the time quipped:

"As a matter of fact the Atlas Tack Company is the only corporation in which Mr Rogers is interested which is not conducted for the purpose of making money!

"It is a well known fact here that the plant is being operated at a loss to the owner, but he has continued its operation as a matter of civic pride, and for the public welfare rather than for personal gain."

Strikes, changing labor practices, unfair decisions in town taxation judgements frustrated the efforts of the noble experiment over the years. Mr. Rogers appointed a highly skilled administrator, George W. Weymouth, as firm president and manager, and seems to have left the head-aches to him — while cheerfully paying the bills himself!

The Atlas Tack Corporation has been a first-rate asset to the area for many years. It must have cost Rogers millions to maintain during the difficult period of its birthing. The whole experiment shows remarkable vision and illustrates the Rogers' belief that man must have work to keep him healthy and self-respecting.



## EPILOGUE

In the preceding pages have been considered but a few of the charitable enterprises undertaken by Henry Huttleston Rogers, who showed great good will not only to his well-loved Fairhaven, but to the entire New Bedford area. Research indicates that there were many more examples of a unique philanthropy which has been little appreciated because of the donor's desire for anonymity.

Perhaps it would be fitting, then, to end this revelation of quiet beneficence as we began it — with yet another Biblical reference. In Matthew 5:15, we read:

*"Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; that it giveth light unto all that are in the house."*



## RESEARCH CREDITS

Allen, Everett S.  
Pamphlet: St. Luke's Hospital  
SIXTY-NINE YEARS OF SERVICE  
1884-1953

THE NEW BEDFORD STANDARD TIMES  
January 15, 1953

Pease, Zephaniah W.  
THE BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE  
May — 1910

Records Library  
Old Dartmouth Historical Society  
Librarian: Virginia Adams

THE FAIRHAVEN STAR — Charles D. Waldron, Editor

1885 — February 7, March 14 and 28  
1897 — October 30  
1899 — January 7, November 4, December 23  
1900 — February 10, July 14  
1904 — January 2  
1905 — February 25, April 1  
1907 — January 7, February 9, May 18, October 30  
1908 — May 30  
1909 — May 22 and 29  
1910 — May 14, December 31

*Materials and expressions in this booklet  
may not be reproduced in any form . .  
without permission of the Librarian,  
Millicent Library, Fairhaven, Massachusetts.*





